



Heat wave a glimpse of climate change's impact in N. America

By GILLIAN FLACCUS

Associated Press

PORTLAND, Ore. (AP) — The U.S. Pacific Northwest was in the throes of a record-shattering heat wave last summer when a woman in her 70s was wheeled into an emergency room with symptoms of a life-threatening heat stroke. Desperate to cool her, Dr. Alexander St. John grabbed a body bag, filled it with ice from the hospital kitchen and zipped the woman inside. Within minutes, her body temperature dropped and her symptoms improved.

"I've never had to do that before. It was surreal," said St. John.

"Twenty years ago, it seems like we would talk about climate change as something that would happen over the coming generations — and all of a sudden it seems to be accelerating to the point where we're all experiencing it in real time."

The technique was used to save several other patients at Seattle's Harborview Medical Center during the five-day heat wave last June that saw temperatures spike as high as 118 degrees Fahrenheit (48 degrees Celsius) in some places and killed an estimated 600 people or more across Oregon, Washington and western Canada.



The sun shines near the Space Needle, Monday, June 28, 2021, in Seattle as Seattle and other cities broke all-time heat records, with temperatures soaring well above 100 degrees Fahrenheit (37.8 Celsius).

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Associated Press

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Heat wave a glimpse of climate change's impact in N. America

Continued from Front

The sweltering stretch across the normally cool region offers a glimpse of the types of extreme weather events that will accelerate in North America within 30 years without a coordinated effort to slow climate change, according to a United Nations report released this week. Even if global warming is limited to 1.5 degrees Celsius, people across the U.S., Mexico and Canada will be at increasing risk of catastrophic weather events.

The report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change lays out how worsening global warming will endanger people's health, drive food insecurity, spur economic upheaval and trigger migration from increasingly uninhabitable places. Low-income and minority populations will be the hardest hit, according to the report, exacerbating existing inequities.

In the West, the report forecasts intensifying drought, extreme heat and wildfires. The Gulf Coast is expected



Cars stranded in a Walmart parking lot after a flash flood on Nolensville Pike in Nashville, Tenn., Sunday, March 28, 2021.

Associated Press

to get more destructive hurricanes and rising sea levels. In the Midwest and Northeast, heavier rains are expected to cause more flooding and damage to crops.

In the summer of 2019, flooding in the U.S. Midwest and South disrupted barge traffic on the Mississippi Riv-

er and damaged cropland in Ohio and Indiana. A different downpour and flood months earlier crippled Offutt Air Force Base in Nebraska.

The economic impacts will be profound. Warming water and ocean acidification will disrupt commercial fisheries, extreme heat will

mean lower yields of key crops such as corn and soybeans and drought will cause livestock losses as animals have less ground to forage, the report found. Since 1980, there have been 35 floods not associated with hurricanes in the U.S. that have caused more than \$1 billion in damage and more than half of those have been since 2010, according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

"We're exposed to untold damage," said Kathleen Miller, a lead author of the report's North America chapter who studies the economic impacts of climate change at the National Center for Atmospheric Research.

"It's time to step up and start thinking about what are our priorities and how can we address these mounting threats," she said. The report still holds out hope that people can slow climate change — or at least adapt to blunt its effects. Prioritizing society's most vulnerable will have the greatest impact on climate resiliency, it said.

The type of adjustments cited in the report are already underway in the Pacific Northwest, which was not built for hot weather. In Seattle, for example, 44% of homes have air conditioning.

After last summer's deadly heat wave, Portland officials are considering alarm systems in public housing that would alert building managers when temperatures climb above 100 degrees. City officials also approved a plan to distribute 15,000 heat pumps, which are an energy-efficient way to cool spaces. Oregon lawmakers are also considering \$15 million in funding to boost distribution air purifiers, air conditioners and heat pumps.

Longer-term discussions in the Pacific Northwest and elsewhere include painting roof tops white and using lighter-colored pavement to repel sunlight, planting more trees in urban centers and creating neighborhood cooling hubs that could also be social spots.

The measures will be key for the groups hit hardest by last summer's deadly heat wave — the elderly living alone, the disabled and the poor.

None of those who died in Portland had central air conditioning, more than half lived in apartments and 10% lived in mobile homes, according to data released by Multnomah County. The city's light-rail train stopped working, making it difficult for low-income residents to reach cooling centers hastily set up in public libraries.

An analysis of data from 1,000 residences found the average temperature in richer homes was 75 degrees, compared with 125 degrees in poorer homes, said Vivek Shandas, a climate professor at Portland State University.

Renee Salas, an emergency room doctor and a fellow at Harvard University's Center for Climate, Health, and the Global Environment, noted that health risks are increasingly not only from heat, but from worsening wildfires that send smoke plumes thousands of miles across North America and rising temperatures that could foster the spread of diseases by mosquitoes and ticks such as dengue fever, West Nile and Lyme disease. □

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GOP torn as Greene speaks to far right amid 'Putin!' chants

By LISA MASCARO

WASHINGTON (AP) — Republican leaders in Congress are torn over what to do with Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene after the congresswoman spoke at a weekend event organized by a white nationalist who marveled over Russia's invasion of Ukraine as the crowd erupted in chants of "Putin!" House Republican leader Kevin McCarthy called the congresswoman's speech on the same stage "unacceptable." Senate Republican leader Mitch McConnell said "there's no place in the Republican Party for white supremacists."

Yet it's unclear whether Greene will face any further reprimand or rebuke for what is now an ongoing pattern of startling behavior. McCarthy had previously suggested the Georgia congresswoman, who is now barred by Democrats from committees, would enjoy a promotion if Republicans take control of the House. It all shows the difficulty Republican leaders have combating the party's drift toward Trump-style authoritarianism and embracing right-wing extremism.

"This may be a chance to burn out the cancer of the Republican Party — those that are, you know, Putin sympathetic," said Rep. Adam Kinzinger, R-Ill., a former military fighter pilot who broke with his party over the Trump presidency. But he worries that McCarthy and other GOP leaders will stop short of kicking Greene out of the party. "He won't because she has power, let's be honest, but I'm embarrassed by it." The scrutiny over the congresswoman, who remains an outlier on Capitol Hill, comes as most of Congress is largely unified in its condemnation of Russian President Vladimir Putin and its support of Ukraine. Ahead of President Joe Biden's first State of the Union address, the invasion has proven to be a rare moment of common ground amid Democrats and Republicans as the U.S. defends the West-



Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene, R-Ga., answers questions during a panel discussion at the Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC) Saturday, Feb. 26, 2022, in Orlando, Fla.

Associated Press

ern-style democracy. This is not the first time Greene, of Georgia, has broken the norms of political behavior by associating with extremist groups, espousing conspiracy theories or musing about violence against politicians she disagrees with. Shortly after taking off in 2021, the House voted to strip the new lawmaker of committee assignments over her views and actions, in a largely party-line vote. "For me, it was appalling and wrong," McCarthy told reporters at the Capitol late Monday.

Asked to elaborate Tuesday as cameras were rolling during a press conference at the Capitol, McCarthy demurred, declining further response, as other Republican leaders and lawmakers stood by. "There's no place in our party for any of this," he had said. McConnell offered no public comments, but said in a statement from his office: "There's no place in the Republican Party for white supremacists or anti-Semitism."

Greene defended her appearance at the America First Political Action Committee event, saying she will continue sharing her message to "every corner" of the U.S. She has said she did not personally know the organizer or his beliefs, and participated so she

could speak to the large crowd.

But the organization is not unfamiliar to Greene or several other Republicans in Congress including Rep. Matt Gaetz, R-Fla., who has said they had briefly considered forming an America First Caucus in Congress. Another, Rep. Paul Gosar, R-Ariz., who has also spoken to the group.

The America First Political Action Committee was launched by Nick Fuentes, who is considered by anti-hate groups as a white nationalist. He grew to prominence after the 2017 neo-Nazi march in Charlottesville that brought the far-right's enthusiasm for Donald Trump into the streets during the first year of his presidency. □

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Justices weigh if trafficking defense applies to homicide

By **TODD RICHMOND**

Associated Press

MADISON, Wis. (AP) — The Wisconsin Supreme Court grappled Tuesday with whether to allow a woman accused of killing a man to argue at trial that the homicide was justified because she was a sex trafficking victim in a case that could help define how far immunity extends for trafficking victims across the country.

Prosecutors allege Chrystul Kizer shot Randall Volar in the head at his Kenosha home, burned down the house and stole his BMW in 2018.

Kizer, who was 17 at the time of the shooting, contends she met Volar on a sex trafficking website and he went on to sexually assault her and traffic her to others. She told detectives she shot Volar after he tried to touch her, according to a criminal complaint. Charges she faces include arson, theft and first-degree intentional homicide. Kizer's attorneys want to argue that she's immune from prosecution under a 2008 state law that absolves sex trafficking victims of any offenses com-



Chrystul Kizer sits in the Kenosha County Courthouse on Thursday, Feb. 6, 2020.

Associated Press

mitted as a result of being trafficked. Almost 40 states have passed laws that provide sex trafficking victims at least some criminal immunity, according to Legal Action of Wisconsin, which provides legal assistance to the poor.

An appellate court in June ruled Kizer could make that case to the jury. Prosecutors appealed to the state Supreme Court, contending the immunity statute can't possibly extend to homicide.

Kizer's attorney, Katie York, told the justices during oral

arguments Tuesday that prosecutors are wrong.

"The Legislature chose (the wording of) 'any offense,'" York said. "They certainly could have limited (immunity) to certain types of crimes, but they did not do so."

Assistant Attorney Timothy Barber said York's interpretation would create an unprecedented expansion of self-defense doctrine by removing any questions about whether killing someone was reasonable or necessary.

"This can't be what the

Legislature intended," Barber said. "The state does not believe that killing someone to get out of a trafficking situation is what's contemplated under the statute."

He also argued that the shooting wasn't a direct result of trafficking because Kizer traveled to Kenosha to see Volar and had time to contemplate shooting him.

York insisted most of the evidence in the case hasn't emerged yet and a jury should be allowed to decide how closely the shooting and the alleged trafficking were connected.

The justices appeared to wrestle with the concepts. Patience Roggensack, a conservative, said the law does seem to trample established self-defense doctrine. She called it "a real conundrum" and Kizer's case "really bad for me."

"You're telling us this is stronger than self-defense," Roggensack said. "(Kizer) doesn't have to prove there's no other way around the bush when she shot him in the head. She had an absolute privilege to do it under the statute."

Jill Karofsky, who directed

the state Justice Department's Office of Crime Victim Services before becoming a judge, responded to Barber's arguments that the shooting wasn't a direct result of trafficking with disbelief, telling him that trafficking isn't a one-time crime and a victim can be trapped in it for years.

"I think what the other side is saying is it's a direct result out of these years of abuse," said Karofsky, a liberal. "I don't understand. Your argument doesn't make any sense to me."

The Associated Press does not typically identify people who say they are victims of sexual assault, but Kizer discussed her case in an interview from jail with The Washington Post that was published in 2019.

It's unclear when the justices might rule. Their decision could set a precedent for how far criminal immunity extends in other states, according to legal experts. More than a dozen anti-violence groups from around the country have filed briefs supporting Kizer. They contend that trafficking victims may feel they have to take matters into their own hands to escape. □

Mississippi county OKs contracts for Emmett Till statue

GREENWOOD, Miss. (AP) — A Mississippi county has approved contracts for a sculptor to make and install a bronze statue of Emmett Till, the Black teenager whose 1955 lynching became a catalyst for the civil rights movement.

Leflore County supervisors voted on the contracts Monday, about seven months after they initially agreed that the county would have a statue of Till, the Greenwood Commonwealth reported.

Installation is expected by about Oct. 1 at Rail Spike Park in Greenwood.

The Justice Department announced in December that it was ending its investigation into the killing of Till. The 14-year-old from Chicago was visiting relatives in the Mississippi Delta when he was abducted, tortured and shot after witnesses said he whistled at a white woman in a rural grocery store in Money. The small community is in Leflore County, about 10 miles (16 kilometers) north of Greenwood.

Till's mother, Mamie Till-Mobley, insisted on an open-casket funeral in Chicago, and Jet magazine published photos of his brutalized body. Those horrific images galvanized civil

rights activists.

Leflore County's two contracts are with the Utah-based company Big Statues, run by sculptor Matt Glenn. The first contract says Leflore County will pay \$110,900 for making and shipping the statue. The second contract says the county will pay \$5,640 for installation.

Mississippi has dozens of statues of Confederate soldiers at county courthouses, but it has few statues of Black historical figures.

State Sen. David Jordan of Greenwood secured \$150,000 from the state last year to pay for the statue. A few weeks after Till was killed, Jordan attended the trial of Roy Bryant and J.W. Milam, the two white men who were charged. An all-white jury acquitted them.

The Justice Department reopened an investigation of Till's killing after a 2017 book quoted Carolyn Bryant Donham, who was married to Roy Bryant in 1955, as saying she lied when she claimed Till grabbed her and made sexual advances while she was working in the store. Relatives have publicly denied that Donham, who is in her 80s, recanted her allegations about Till. □



An undated portrait shows Emmett Till.

Associated Press

NATO chief sees no need to change nuclear alert level

By **MONIKA SCISLOWSKA**

Associated Press

LASK AIR BASE, Poland

(AP) — NATO's chief said Tuesday that, despite Russia's threats about nuclear weapons, the alliance sees no need to change its own nuclear weapons alert level.

The alliance's secretary-general, Jens Stoltenberg, spoke to The Associated Press following talks on European security with Polish President Andrzej Duda at an air base in Lask, central Poland, where NATO's Polish and U.S. fighter jets F-15 and F-16 are based.

"We will always do what is needed to protect and defend our allies, but we don't think there is any need now to change the alert levels of NATO's nuclear forces," Stoltenberg said.

Ukraine is not a member of NATO, and the 30-member military alliance is not intervening directly in the armed conflict between Russia and Ukraine. But NATO members are supporting Ukraine with military equipment and humanitarian and financial aid, Stoltenberg said.

The Kremlin began an invasion of Ukraine last week and on Tuesday shelled the



NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg speaks to the media at Lask air base in Poland, Tuesday, March 1, 2022.

Associated Press

center of the Ukrainian city of Kharkiv. Russia has raised the specter of nuclear war, reporting on Monday that its land, air and sea nuclear forces were on high alert following President Vladimir Putin's weekend order. NATO itself has no nuclear weapons, but three of its members do — the United States, Britain and France. "We strongly believe it's

reckless and irresponsible the way Russia is speaking about nuclear weapons," Stoltenberg said, standing in one of the base's hangars, which has been turned into a conference room with Polish and NATO flags and jets around it. Stoltenberg stressed that Russia has signed a number of deals agreeing that nuclear war cannot be won

and should not be fought. He called on Russia to "stop the attacks and withdraw all its forces and engage in good faith in diplomatic efforts" to end the war. Government delegations from Ukraine and Russia met for talks in southeastern Belarus on Monday, but the outcome was not immediately clear. "This is a horrendous, hor-

rific invasion of an innocent country and we see that civilians are killed. It's a brutality that has to stop immediately," Stoltenberg said.

The United States recently reinforced the eastern flank of NATO's territory with some 5,000 additional troops deployed to Poland and Romania. Both NATO countries border Ukraine, which is not part of NATO. A number of French troops were traveling to Romania on Tuesday to further strengthen the region, Stoltenberg said.

The alliance is to discuss further reinforcement steps at its next summit in June in Madrid.

It is NATO's responsibility to "ensure that we don't see a development where a conflict in Ukraine spiraled out of control and becomes a full-fledged confrontation between NATO and Russia in Europe," Stoltenberg said.

He said alliance commanders are insisting that they are "able to maintain deconfliction (contacts) with Russia," he said.

From Lask, Stoltenberg flew to Tallin, Estonia, for talks on security of the Baltic region, which borders Russia and its ally Belarus. □

Israel high court suspends Palestinians' evictions for now

JERUSALEM (AP) — Israel's Supreme Court on Tuesday ruled that a group of families slated for eviction from a flashpoint east Jerusalem neighborhood can remain in their homes for the time being.

The ruling could work to ease tensions in Jerusalem's Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood, which helped ignite the 11-day war between Israel and Hamas in Gaza last year.

The court ruled that the families can stay in their homes for now until Israel carries out a land arrangement, a process that could take years or may not be carried out at all, according to Ir Amim, an advocacy group that was not involved in the court case. For the time being, the four families residing in the

homes will be recognized as protected tenants. Each will deposit a largely symbolic rent amounting to \$62 a month to a trust, until the property's ownership is settled.

Sami Arsheid, a lawyer representing the families' case before the court, said the decision was "something huge" that ran counter to the previous 63 rulings by Israeli courts on the issue of Palestinian properties in Sheikh Jarrah.

He said the court agreed that there's a strong claim of Palestinian ownership of the property and that his clients "feel some relief that they are not going to be evicted from their homes." Dozens of Palestinian families in east Jerusalem are at risk of eviction by Jewish settler organizations, and

thousands face the threat of demolition because of discriminatory policies that make it extremely difficult for Palestinians to build new homes or expand existing ones.

The properties in question were built on land that was owned by a Jewish community trust before the 1948 war surrounding Israel's creation, the court documents say. After the war, when east Jerusalem was controlled by Jordan, Palestinian refugee families were settled in houses on the property. Israel took control of east Jerusalem in the 1967 Mideast war and since 1972 settler groups have tried to claim the property and evict the Palestinian residents.

Israeli law allows Jews to reclaim property lost dur-



A woman looks at the ruins of a Palestinian house demolished by the Jerusalem municipality in the east Jerusalem neighborhood of Sheikh Jarrah, Wednesday, Jan. 19, 2022.

Associated Press

ing the 1948 war but does not accord Palestinians the right to recover property they lost in the same war, even if they still reside in areas controlled by Israel. Other threatened evictions in Sheikh Jarrah and other

neighborhoods, which are tied up in decades-old legal battles between Palestinian residents and Jewish settlers, set off protests and clashes last year that eventually helped ignite the Gaza war. □

Former top U.S. defense officials visit Taiwan amid tensions

By JOHNSON LAI

Associated Press

TAIPEI, Taiwan (AP) — A delegation of former U.S. defense officials arrived in Taiwan on Tuesday in a sign of stepped-up communication between the sides amid a looming threat from China.

Former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Mike Mullen is leading the five-person delegation that is to meet with President Tsai Ing-wen and other top officials during the two-day visit. They were greeted at Taipei's Songshan Airport by Taiwanese Minister of Foreign Affairs Joseph Wu, who bumped elbows with the group members.

Tsai's office said the delegation had been appointed by U.S. President Joe Biden and the visit would permit "an in-depth exchange of views on Taiwan-U.S. cooperation issues in various fields."

Taiwan hopes the sides will "continue to deepen the steady development of Taiwan-U.S. relations, continue to jointly maintain regional peace and stability, and continue to jointly contribute to global peace and prosperity," it said in a statement.

Separately, former U.S. Sec-



In this photo released by Taiwan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Taiwan's Foreign Minister Joseph Wu, right, greets former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs Adm. Mike Mullen as he arrives at Taipei Songshan Airport in Taipei, Taiwan, Tuesday, March 1, 2022.

Associated Press

retary of State Mike Pompeo is to arrive in Taiwan on Wednesday. Pompeo, who earlier led the Central Intelligence Agency, will also meet with Tsai and address a forum, according to the Foreign Ministry.

"Former Secretary of State Pompeo's visit displays fully U.S. bipartisan backing for its 'rock solid' support" for Taiwan, the ministry said.

Russia's invasion of Ukraine has drawn fresh attention to China's threat to use

force to annex self-governing democratic Taiwan, which it claims as its own territory.

Circumstances are very different, however. Taiwan lies 160 kilometers (100 miles) across the Taiwan Strait from mainland China and enjoys strong support from the U.S., which is legally bound to ensure the island can defend itself and to treat all threats to it as matters of "grave concern." China has not condemned

Russia's war against Ukraine and its criticism of sanctions leveled against Moscow is widely seen as a sign of commitment to the two countries' mutual defiance of Washington and the West, despite Beijing's long-standing defense of the principle of national sovereignty.

In Beijing, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin dismissed the U.S. delegation's visit, saying it was "futile for the

U.S. to send anyone to demonstrate its so-called support for Taiwan."

Wang told a daily briefing that China urges the U.S. to honor past communiques signed with China, "stop all forms of official exchange with Taiwan, and handle Taiwan-related issues with caution so as to avoid further serious damage to the overall situation of China-U.S. relations."

China has been sending military aircraft into Taiwan's air defense identification zone on a near-daily basis, and on Saturday, its Defense Ministry protested as provocative the passage of the guided-missile destroyer USS Ralph Johnson through the Taiwan Strait.

The strait is in international waters and the U.S. Navy said the ship's passage "demonstrates the United States' commitment to a free and open Indo-Pacific."

China routinely protests U.S. contacts with Taiwan's government and announced in November that its military conducted air and naval readiness patrols in the direction of the Taiwan Strait after five U.S. lawmakers met with Tsai on an unannounced one-day visit. □

Massive cargo ship carrying cars sinks in mid-Atlantic



In this undated photo provided by the Portuguese Navy on Feb. 18, 2022, smoke billows from the burning Felicity Ace car transport ship as seen from the Portuguese Navy NPR Setubal ship southeast of the mid-Atlantic Portuguese Azores Islands.

Associated Press

LISBON, Portugal (AP) — A large cargo vessel carrying cars from Germany to the United States sank Tuesday in the mid-Atlantic, 13 days

after a fire broke out on board, the ship's manager and the Portuguese navy said.

The Felicity Ace sank about

400 kilometers (250 miles) off Portugal's Azores Islands as it was being towed, MOL Ship Management in Singapore said in a statement. A salvage team had put out the fire.

The 200-meter-long (650-foot-long) vessel listed to starboard before going under, the ship's manager said.

The Portuguese navy confirmed the sinking, saying it occurred outside Portuguese waters. A Portuguese Air Force helicopter evacuated the 22 crew members when the fire first broke out, setting the ship adrift.

Ocean-going tugboats with firefighting equipment had been hosing down the ship's hull to cool it.

It wasn't clear how many cars were onboard the

ship, but vessels of the Felicity Ace's size can carry at least 4,000 vehicles.

European carmakers declined to discuss how many vehicles and what models were on board, but Porsche customers in the United States were being contacted by their dealers, the company said.

"We are already working to replace every car affected by this incident and the first new cars will be built soon," Angus Fitton, vice president of PR at Porsche Cars North America, Inc., told The Associated Press in an email. The ship was transporting electric and non-electric vehicles, according to Portuguese authorities. Suspicion on what started the fire on Feb. 16 has fallen on lithium batteries used in

electric vehicles, though authorities say they have no firm evidence about the cause.

Authorities feared the ship could pollute the ocean. The ship was carrying 2,000 metric tons (2,200 tons) of fuel and 2,000 metric tons (2,200 tons) of oil. It can carry more than 17,000 metric tons (18,700 tons) of cargo.

The Portuguese navy said in a statement that only a few pieces of wreckage and a small patch of oil was visible where the ship went down. The tugboats were breaking up the patch with hoses, it said.

A Portuguese Air Force plane and a Portuguese navy vessel are to remain at the scene on the lookout for signs of pollution. □

Thousands evacuate in worst Australian floods in a decade

Associated Press

BRISBANE, Australia (AP) —

Tens of thousands of people were ordered to evacuate their homes by Tuesday and hundreds of thousands more were told to prepare to flee as parts of Australia's southeast coast were inundated by the worst flooding in more than a decade. At least 10 people have died. New South Wales Premier Dominic Perrottet said there had been 1,000 rescues in the state by Tuesday and more than 6,000 calls for authorities to help. Scores of residents, some with pets, spent hours trapped on their roofs by a fast-rising river in the town of Lismore in the state's north.

The body of a woman in her 80s was found by a neighbor in her Lismore home on Tuesday, a police statement said. There were no details of how she died. Dozens of cars were trapped on a bridge in the nearby town of Woodburn over Monday night with both the bridge's approaches submerged. Up to 50 people were rescued from the bridge early Tuesday, officials said.

"We had no capabilities to get them off in the dark so we just had to make sure that they bunkered down and we went in this morning and got them all out," Woodburn State Emergency Services Commander Ashley Slapp said.

The floodwaters were moving south into New South Wales from Queensland state in the worst disaster in the region since what was described as a once-in-a-century event in 2011.

Perrottet said 40,000 people had been ordered to evacuate, while 300,000 others had been placed under evacuation warnings.

Government meteorologist Jonathan Howe described the recent rainfall in northern New South Wales and southern Queensland as "astronomical."

Nine of the 10 deaths reported so far were in Queensland. A 76-year-old man who disappeared with his vehicle in floodwa-



People wade through flood water as they relocate in Chinderah, Australia, Tuesday, March 1, 2022.

ters northwest of Brisbane on Sunday has since been confirmed dead.

Queensland Police Commissioner Katarina Carroll said another man in his 70s remained missing after falling from his moored yacht in the state capital Brisbane into a swollen river on Saturday.

The cleanup was underway in Brisbane, Australia's third most populous city, despite more storms forecast for later in the week. Brisbane Lord Mayor Adrian Schrinner urged people to register for the "Mud Army," as the thousands of volunteers who mobilized to help out after the 2011 floods were dubbed.

Thousands of homes in Brisbane were inundated Sunday, many by swollen creeks in suburbs such as Ashgrove, where Kelvin Barfoot had to evacuate with members of his family, including his 99-year-old mother-in-law, Mina Baker, in a State Emergency Service rescue boat.

The family moved back into the top floor of their two-story home and started removing damaged furniture and electrical appliances that had been covered by almost 1.5 meters (5 feet) of water.

"We thought we were pretty well prepared for it," said Barfoot, who leads a

volunteer bush care group which has tallied more than 4,000 hours of planting and weeding along Enoggera Creek over the past six years. "Just unbelievable. When it did start coming in, it went up very quick."

Barfoot said his daughter and her husband swam to the house to help with the rescue after notifying emergency services that her grandmother — who moved to Australia from Christchurch, New Zealand, after earthquakes there in 2011 killed 185 people — needed to get out.

"We were pretty much stuck upstairs at that point," Barfoot said. "That was quite traumatic for my mother-in-law — we got her out (of New Zealand) after the earthquakes, so it was all a bit reminiscent of that for her."

"Now she's back home. She wanted to come home. She was a bit traumatized, but she's tough. She came down and asked me if there was anything to do to help!"

Schrinner said the six-day rainfall in downtown Brisbane — 792.8 millimeters (31.2 inches) through Monday morning — was significantly higher than the previous record of 655.8 millimeters (25.8 inches) set when flooding devastated the city in 1974.

"Back in the U.K., we do weather warnings for 20 millimeters (1 inch) of rain," Threlfall said. "My weather gauge here has recorded 950 millimeters (37 inches) in three days. Brisbane's average is about 1,200 millimeters (47 inches) for the year, so we've pretty much had 80% of annual rainfall in three days."

"No real escaping the water, I guess."

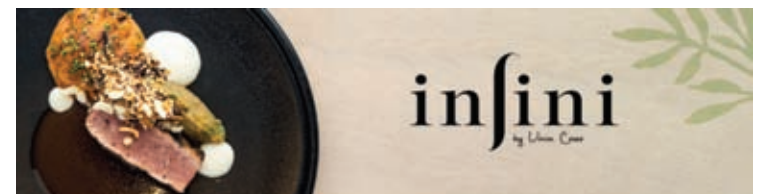
The extraordinary rainfall comes as the United Nations' Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change reported this week that vast swathes of Australia have already lost 20% of its rainfall and the country's fire risk has gone beyond worst-case scenarios developed just a few years ago.

Australia's hottest and driest year on record was 2019, which ended with devastating wildfires across southeast Australia. The fires directly killed 33 people and another 400 people were killed by the smoke.

The fires also destroyed more than 3,000 homes and razed 19 million hectares (47 million acres) of farmland and forests. □

Associated Press

Rick Threlfall and Steve Hadley, meteorologists who moved from England to Australia and have been living in Newmarket, Brisbane, for almost a decade, were in the process of sandbagging the ground floor of their home but couldn't finish in time to beat the rapidly rising flood.



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Bohemian Restaurant & Bar, The Story: French Nomads in Culinary Avant-Garde



Like nomads travel from place to place to find fresh pasture for their livestock, the Nataf family –father Victor with sons David and Gregory - faithfully followed their nose for good food. As young boys, they indulged in their grandparent's culinary joie-de-vivre in the South of France. Ticked by the palette of excellent dishes prepared in their mid-seventies' restaurant in the Alps of France and filled with exquisite taste of their other restaurants in the beautiful island of Porquerolles near St Tropez that made it to a ranking of 13/20 in the Gault Millau restaurant grading. To the Natafs, food is a bohemian experience_ unconventional, eclectic and off the beaten track. Welcome to Bohemian Aruba!

music fills the air. The décor is designed by David himself.

David Nataf - Owner

"Thoughts of finger licking dishes fill my mind thinking of my youth. The smell of fresh-baked croissants and chocolate bread hand made by my uncle's brother in law's father "the baker". The restaurant's kitchen fridge stuffed with the most exquisite dishes that my brother and I consumed secretly after a night out to the frustration of the chef. We were young boys eating away the night with foie gras and loup de mer local branzino."

Tongue melting fondue and raclette, wood oven pizzas with fresh Emmentaler cheese and hand-picked champignons founded his foodie character.



Add this to the time he spent at the grandparents' house in the vineyards with fruits, veggies, poultry, and game within hand's reach. What was missing was bought at the weekly farmers market. "I grew up with the farm-to-table concept."

Le Magic

The family magic is translated through David into Bohemian. Starters like Vitello Tonnato, le Ceviche, homemade Foie Gras Terrine or Escargots "A la Bourguignonne" tickle your taste buds. For entrees Whole Shrimps Flambe with Cognac, Grilled 10oz Angus Rib Eye Steak "Maître d'Hôtel" or Braised Lamb Shank ignite passion in your soul. Spicy Moroccan Mahi-Mahi Kebab with chickpea hummus

and ratatouille crumble, Paella made with their own fish broth filled with chicken seafood and chorizo are other culinary delights but there is much more. Wines are imported directly from France regions, as is the champagne. Italian, Spanish, American and Australian choices complete the list.

Raving reviews on a continuous basis prove that Bohemian has got it! Every Wednesday there is Live Flamenco with Angela Croes, on Thursdays you will enjoy the beautiful live sounds of Angela's violin and on Friday's and Saturday's go with the beat of electro lounge. Live salsa music can be enjoyed on Sunday's.

"Join our gypsy experience, travel with taste"

A Grande entrée through a huge, wooden, Moroccan-style door takes you into a foodies Garden of Eden. Big trees stand tall and proudly, lit with hanging lanterns creating a green and romantic lush paradise. There's a playful setting of different-styled tables, including seating under a Colombian Rattan tipi tent, complete the feel of let go alias laissez-faire. The cool bar blinks to New York loft style, think industrial bold. Waiters with hip suspenders and berets add a hint of French flair while lounge



For reservations call +297 280 8448 or mail reservations@bohemianaruba.com or book through the website bohemianaruba.com.□

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Can you top this? Jeff and carla climb the hooiberg 6 times!

By Clyde Harms

ORANJESTAD - Jeff and Carla Swederski have come from Stillwater, New York to spend four weeks at Milagro's Garden Apartments.

They have hiked all over the island and have seen just about everything that is to be seen in Aruba. Like most other visitors, Jeff and Carla visit our beautiful beaches often. But, unlike most visitors, Jeff and Carla have developed a liking for climbing the Hooiberg. They have climbed it not one, but 6 times! They love the view of the whole island from the top.

Jeff and Carla will be doing some serious mountain hiking when they attend the Big mountain hike in Montana in August. □



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TUE Arts & Crafts Expression



WED Cultural Dance Show



THU Acrobatic Show



SUN Violin Show



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ISLAND INSIGHT

Article by Etnia Nativa

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Island's Rock Art

Episode CXLIV - 144

Hi guys good morning. Together we can all be Aruba's rangers, guardians of our patrimony. Let's create a consciousness that rock Art is our heritage; yes, much more than just meaningless doodles made by our Aruban fore fathers. Contrary to popular belief it was not created by some underdeveloped cannibal inhabitants of mythical epoch, it does not reflect buried treasure maps. Neither were they meant to just scare demons or bad spirits away. What rock Art in general does provide is means of understanding the sacred as well as the mundane perspective of life "in our case" with what prehistoric Amerindian cultures as a community could regionally and specially insularly have experienced by means of rock art expressions and practices relating to it.

Here we can examine something in great detail in order to understand it better or to discover more about it, windows for analyzing cultural interaction through symbolic patterns.

The pre historic artist had the goal in mind to inform, create beliefs and handing over knowledge among peers. Communication abilities were a valuable in trade and commerce among neighboring tribes like a way of life. Rock art was also a way of telling stories and archiving it for future generation's use. Changes in rock art styles often reflect new ideologies and/or religious practices. The quality of the rock art and the level of sophistication of the culture it belongs to are not necessarily related.

Petroglyphs are less common than Pictographs. Only one site has been discovered and is accessible to public. The incrustations are found on the dark, exposed surfaces of a granite builder at a site known as Siribana (No.2) The top layer or surfaces of the rock served as the base color for the abstract representational of the "Mythical twins" supernatural beings also referred



to as alien figures. Abstract figures that were used by hunters and gatherers in the oldest known new world rock Art bear no resemblance to the real world. Pecking into the rock to create Petroglyphs was accomplished with a hammer stone or stone chisel. Different pecking techniques created different styles. Incising or scratching with a sharp tool was also practiced. Incised designs are more expressive and detailed than pecked designs. Pictographs are usually created on light colored, protected from the elements granite, Quartz Diorite, surfaces or on limestone walls and caves ceilings. Stylized animals, humans and geometric object designs are common subjects. Pictograph pigments and binders were probably obtained from soot, vegetal pigments and blood or pulverized minerals. While even some sea snails could have provided a purple reddish stain. Binders were used to stabilize the coloring material and allow it to stick to the rock. The colors generally used were red, orange, white and black. Red pigment probably came from hematite or iron oxide; orange from a combination of hematite, ocher, limonite, lichen or Brazil wood.

Other sources of pigment included white clay, silica, gypsum, chalk, calcium carbonate, and charcoal. Pastels were created from clay mixed with other minerals. Water was used to create consistency but the binding agent could be anything from saliva, to vegetal juices and vegetal oils, to a mix of water and calcium meal, tree gums, even the whites of bird eggs or guano were employed in many regions of the world. The surface of the rock was sometimes smoothed and abraded in prepa-

ration for painting. Tools were sticks or probably brushes made from the tips of agave leaves chewed or beaten to remove the pulp, leaving vertical fibers for painting small solid areas, clear lines, and other fine details. Wider areas could be painted for example with a corn husk or cotton wrapped around the finger or even the finger itself depending on the time frame which these were made. Dots were applied with the fingertips. Entire hand prints could have been created using for example a stenciled design by spraying or blowing the paint around the hand that has been placed with spread fingers on the surface of the rock.

The official Native rock artist was often a mystical Medicine Man, herb mixer, the color maker but most probably because of his power to heal and communicate with the supernatural. A continuation of the early shaman, endemic believe to most tribal societies, most likely survived from before the migrations across the Bering Street over twenty thousand years ago. □

About Etnia Nativa

Our goal is to raise cultural awareness, promote education and safeguard our heritage as the sacred mother seed guiding you to be the next guardian of the island. If you love Aruba its origins and its cultural heritage, be part of the exclusive visitors of this cozy home-atelier called "Etnia Nativa". This private residential houses collections of native art, archaeological artifacts and historic furniture, while the facilities themselves are the result of the transformation of recycled materials. Meet this acclaimed columnist, artist and native cultural expert at home! Book your visit Whatsapp + 297 592 2702- or mail: etnianativa03@gmail.com



Nations agree to release 60M barrels of oil amid Russian war

By DAVID McHUGH

AP Business Writer

FRANKFURT, Germany (AP)

— The International Energy Agency's 31 member countries agreed Tuesday to release 60 million barrels of oil from their strategic reserves — half of that from the United States — "to send a strong message to oil markets" that supplies won't fall short after the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

The board of the Paris-based IEA made the decision at an extraordinary meeting of energy ministers chaired by U.S. Energy Secretary Jennifer Granholm. She said in a statement that U.S. President Joe Biden approved a commitment of 30 million barrels and that the U.S. is ready to "take additional measures" if needed.

The group's "decision reflects our common commitment to address significant market and supply disruptions related to President Putin's war on Ukraine," Granholm said.

Russia plays an outsized role in global energy markets as the third-largest oil producer. Its exports of 5 million barrels of crude per day amount to about 12% of the global oil trade. Some 60% goes to Europe and another 20% to China. So far, U.S. and European sanctions have not barred oil or gas exports and have included exceptions for transactions to pay for oil and gas. Western lead-



A pumping unit sucks oil from the ground near Greensburg, Kan. on March 6, 2012.

Associated Press

ers are reluctant to restrict Russian oil exports at a time when global energy markets are tight and high prices are fueling inflation in developed economies. But the invasion has still shaken markets worldwide. On Tuesday, oil prices soared, with U.S. benchmark crude surpassing \$106 per barrel — the highest price since 2014.

"The situation in energy markets is very serious and demands our full attention," IEA executive director Fatih Birol said. "Global energy security is under threat, putting the world economy at risk during a fragile stage of the recovery."

Last month, the IEA said

global demand for oil was 100.2 million barrels a day in the fourth quarter of 2021. Demand is expected to grow to an average of 100.6 million barrels a day this year, as restrictions to limit the spread of COVID-19 are eased, the IEA said.

Besides the United States, other members of the organization include Germany, France, the United Kingdom, Japan and Canada. IEA members hold emergency stockpiles of 1.5 billion barrels of oil. The release amounts to 4% of stockpiles, or roughly 2 million barrels per day for 30 days.

It's only the fourth time in his-

tory that the IEA has done a coordinated drawdown since the reserves were established in the wake of the Arab oil embargo in 1974. From the U.S. perspective, the price of crude oil determines a big portion of what drivers pay to fill up their cars with gasoline. The national average for a gallon of gas is \$3.61, which is 26 cents more than a month ago and 90 cents more than a year ago, according to motor club federation AAA.

In 2021, the U.S. imported roughly 245 million barrels of crude oil and petroleum products from Russia — a one-year increase of 24% over 2020. Nearly 8% of U.S.

imports of crude oil and petroleum products that year came from Russia, based on data from the statistical arm of the U.S. Energy Department.

In November, Biden announced a release of 50 million barrels of oil in coordination with other energy-importing countries, but the measure had only a fleeting impact on oil prices, which have continued to rise.

Stewart Glickman, an oil analyst for CFRA Research, said the latest release from the SPR would only be partially helpful, because most of the reserves are light oil, while the U.S. largely imports a heavier grade of oil from Russia.

"Refiners plan around a certain blend of crudes, so you can't always just swap out one for another easily," he said.

Granholm stressed the need to invest in renewable energy as a way to reduce dependence on Russian oil and natural gas.

To that end, Democratic Sen. Joe Manchin of West Virginia called on Biden and the oil industry to take immediate action "up to and including banning crude oil imports from Russia."

"If there was ever a time to be energy independent, it is now," said Manchin, who supports fossil fuels such as coal and natural gas that are his crucial to his energy-producing state. □

Cash-strapped Egypt hikes Suez Canal transit fees for ships

CAIRO (AP)

— Cash-strapped Egypt increased transit fees Tuesday for ships passing through the Suez Canal, one of the world's most crucial waterways, with hikes of up to 10%, officials said.

The Suez Canal Authority said on its website the increases were "in line with the significant growth in global trade" and cited the canal's "development and enhancement of the transit service."

According to a statement, transit fees for liquefied petroleum gas, chemical

tankers, and other liquid bulk tankers increased by 10%. Vessels carrying vehicles, natural gas and general cargo, as well as multi-purpose vessels, will see an increase of 7%, while a 5% increase will be imposed on oil and crude tankers and dry bulk vessels, it said. The hikes could later be revised or called off, according to changes in global shipping, it added.

Canal authorities have been working to widen and deepen the waterway's southern part, where a hulking vessel ran aground

and closed off the canal in March 2021.

The six-day blockage disrupted global shipment. Some ships were forced to take the long alternate route around the Cape of Good Hope at Africa's southern tip, requiring additional fuel and other costs. Hundreds of other ships waited in place for the blockage to end.

About 10% of global trade, including 7% of the world's oil, flows through the Suez Canal, which connects the Mediterranean and Red seas. For Egypt, the canal



An army zodiac secures the entrance of a new section of the Suez Canal in Ismailia, Egypt, Aug. 6, 2015.

Associated Press

— which first opened in 1869 — is a source of both national pride and foreign currency. Authorities

said 20,649 vessels passed through the canal last year, a 10% increase compared to 18,830 vessels in 2020. □

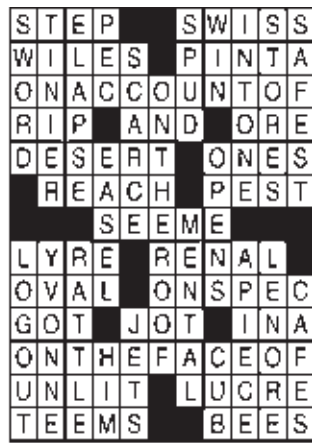
CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

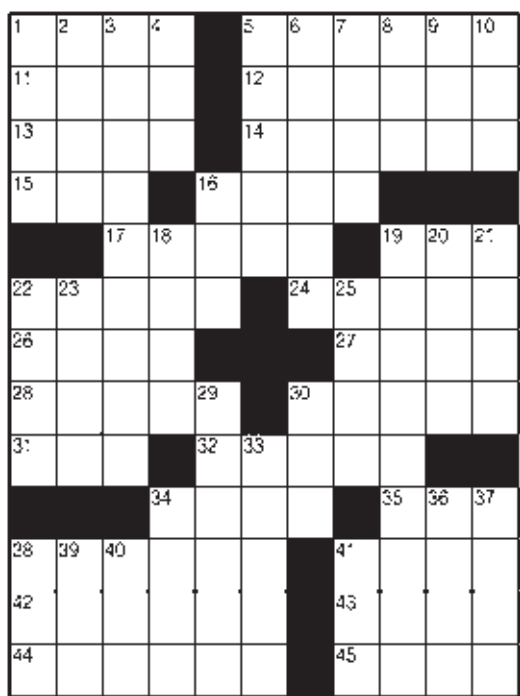
- ACROSS**
- 43 Cruise stop
 - 5 Havana setting
 - 8 Nautilus areas
 - 11 Turkey neighbor
 - 12 Esprit de corps
 - 13 Diplomatic skill
 - 14 Made amends
 - 15 Caribou's kin
 - 16 Muffin choice
 - 17 Edinburgh natives
 - 19 Kicker's aid
 - 22 Leafy lunch
 - 24 Ancient
 - 26 Vaccine type
 - 27 Ballet bend
 - 28 Usher's place
 - 30 Fists, in slang
 - 31 Stadium cry
 - 32 Like fresh brownies
 - 34 Keenness
 - 35 Game caller
 - 38 Tooth-brush target
 - 41 Fancy dance
 - 42 Not nervous

DOWN

- 1 Allude to
- 2 River of Russia
- 3 Programmer's punctuation
- 4 Little laborer
- 5 Stylish
- 6 Bleaching chemical
- 7 Magnetic metal
- 8 Operated
- 9 Hearty brew
- 10 Went first
- 16 Physique, slangily
- 18 Cry out
- 19 Hurl insults
- 20 Pennsylvania port
- 21 Peepers
- 22 Take wing
- 23 Diva's piece
- 25 Musical work
- 29 Printer's line
- 30 Game cube
- 33 Story
- 34 Coup d'—
- 36 First name in scat
- 37 Took wing
- 38 Smidgen
- 39 Pigged out
- 40 Dem.'s foe
- 41 Smidgen



Yesterday's answer



AXYDLBAAXR
is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three I's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

3-2 CRYPTOQUOTE

NT LJS BPHL LJFHS ZJF
DFEGNHJGX HFWCJL BFZSO QX
ONVNTC LJS QPEY ED LJS
LNC SO STVS WB NTHNVS.

— KFTT D. YSTTSVX
Yesterday's Cryptoquote: TO ERR IS HUMAN, BUT WHEN THE ERASER WEARS OUT AHEAD OF THE PENCIL, YOU'RE OVERDOING IT. — JOSH JENKINS

Big tech grapples with Russian state media, propaganda

By DAVID KLEPPER and AMANDA SEITZ
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — As Russia's war in Ukraine plays out for the world on social media, big tech platforms are moving to restrict Russian state media from using their platforms to spread propaganda and misinformation.

After the European Union's president called for a ban on Russian state media, a wave of tech companies blocked the channels from their platforms.

Google announced Tuesday that it's blocking the YouTube channels of those outlets in Europe "effective immediately" but acknowledged "it'll take time for our systems to fully ramp up." Russia's RT and Sputnik accounts were also disabled in Europe on China's TikTok, a video-sharing platform, a company spokesperson confirmed Tuesday. The actions followed Meta's announcement that it would bar the state media from its platforms, Instagram and Facebook.

Banning RT and Sputnik won't shut off the well of disinformation around the war in Ukraine that's flowing into social media feeds from everyday users, pundits or the Kremlin's vast network of Facebook pages, trolls and reporters.



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Aruba Bank N.V. Acc. #332668
Caribbean Mercantile Bank N.V.
Acc. #23951903
RBC Royal Bank Acc. #1330772

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Activism grows nationwide in response to school book bans

By **HEATHER HOLLINGSWORTH and HILLEL ITALIE**
Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Until a year ago, Stephana Ferrell's political activism was limited to the occasional letter to elected officials. Then came her local school board meeting in Orange County, Florida and an objection raised to Maia Kobabe's graphic novel "Gender Queer: A Memoir." And the county's decision last fall to remove it from high school shelves.

"By winter break, we realized this was happening all over the state and needed to start a project to rally parents to protect access to information and ideas in school," says Ferrell, a mother of two. Along with fellow Orange County parent Jen Cousins, she founded the Florida Freedom to Read Project, which works with existing parent groups statewide on a range of educational issues, including efforts to "keep or get back books that have gone under challenge or have been banned."

Over the past year, book challenges and bans have reached levels not seen in decades, according to officials at the American Library Association, the National Coalition Against Censorship (NCAC) and other advocates for free expression. Censorship efforts have ranged from local communities such as Orange County and a Tennessee school board's pulling Art Spiegelman's graphic novel "Maus," to



Amanda Darrow, director of youth, family and education programs at the Utah Pride Center, poses with books, including "The Bluest Eye," by Toni Morrison, that have been the subject of complaints from parents in Salt Lake City on Dec. 16, 2021. The wave of book bannings around the country has reached a level not seen for decades.

Associated Press

statewide initiatives.

"There are some books with pornography and pedophilia that should absolutely be removed from K through 12 school libraries," says Yael Levin, a spokeswoman for No Left Turn in Education, a national group opposed to what it calls a "Leftist agenda" for public schools that has called on Attorney General Merrick Garland to investigate the availability of "Gender Queer" among other books. "Now we're not talking about a public library or bookstores. We're talking about K through 12 school libraries, books that are just pornographic and with pedophilic content."

According to PEN Ameri-

ca, which has been tracking legislation around the country, dozens of bills have been proposed that restrict classroom reading and discussion. Virtually all of the laws focus on sexuality, gender identity or race. In Missouri, a bill would ban teachers from using the "1619 Project," the New York Times magazine issue which centers around slavery in American history and was released last fall as a book.

The responses have come from organizations large and small, and sometimes from individuals such as Ferrell.

The American Civil Liberties Union, PEN America and the NCAC have been work-

ing with local activists, educators and families around the country, helping them "to prepare for meetings, to draft letters and to mobilize opposition," according to PEN America's executive director, Suzanne Nossel. The CEO of Penguin Random House, Markus Dohle, has said he will personally donate \$500,000 for a book defense fund to be run in partnership with PEN. Hachette Book Group has announced "emergency donations" to PEN, the NCAC and the Authors Guild. Legal action has been one strategy. In Missouri, the ACLU filed suit in federal court in mid-February to prevent the Wentzville school district from remov-

ing such books as "Gender Queer," Nobel laureate Toni Morrison's "The Bluest Eye" and Keise Laymon's memoir "Heavy." The civil liberties union has also filed open records requests in Tennessee and Montana over book bans, and a warning letter in Mississippi against what it described as the "unconstitutionality of public library book bans."

Vera Eidelman, staff attorney with the ACLU Speech, Privacy and Technology Project, cited the U.S. Supreme Court's 1982 ruling declaring that "local school boards may not remove books from school library shelves simply because they dislike the ideas contained in those books." The tricky area, Eidelman acknowledged, is that schools officials are allowed to ban books for reasons other than not approving of the viewpoints the books express. Officials might determine, for instance, that the book is too profane or vulgar.

"The problem is just that often our definitions, for example, of vulgarity or age appropriateness, are for lack of a better word, mushy, and they can also hide or be used as pretext for viewpoint-based decisions by the government," she said.

Two anti-banning initiatives were launched in Pennsylvania. In Kutztown, eighth grader Joslyn Dikkenbaugh formed a banned book club last fall that began with a reading of George Orwell's "Animal Farm." □



Author Ntozake Shange attends a special screening of "For Colored Girls" in New York on Oct. 25, 2010.

Associated Press

Classic Ntozake Shange play to be reissued in book form

NEW YORK (AP) — A classic play by the late Ntozake Shange is being reissued in book form in April to coincide with its Broadway revival by the director-choreographer Camille A. Brown. Scribner announced Tuesday that Brown and award-winning novelist Jesmyn Ward will provide introductions for Shange's choreopoem

"for colored girls who have considered suicide/when the rainbow is enuf," which first ran on Broadway in 1976. The book will include an additional poem never used in the text before and photographs from previous stagings of the play.

"Of all the shows to be given as an opportunity to debut as a first-time Broadway director and chore-

ographer, 'for colored girls ...' feels like a gift," Brown said in a statement. "I'm thrilled that I've been entrusted to combine all the parts of myself — dance, music and theater arts — to shape and share this timeless story again with the world."

Brown's choreography for "Choir Boy" brought her a Tony nomination in 2019. □

NHL launching faceoff probability stat with AWS technology

By **STEPHEN WHYNO**

The NHL is launching a new faceoff probability stat that uses a decade's worth of data and in-game analytics to determine the likelihood of each player in the circle winning the draw.

The league and Amazon Web Services unveiled the new feature Tuesday. It's the latest innovation in the puck and player tracking sphere and could be just the start of machine-learning technology in hockey with implications for gambling and countless other statistics.

Using information from the past 10 years of games in combination with the location of a faceoff, game situation and player performance, AWS software spits out percentage chances of who's coming away with the puck in a matter of seconds before the linesman drops it.

"Hockey is such a series of so many events that lead up to an outcome," NHL executive vice president of development and innovation Dave Lehanski said. "We've identified the faceoff as being this key component — the beginning of some of these incredible events, and that's what we want to



Los Angeles Kings center Anze Kopitar (11) and Vegas Golden Knights center William Karlsson (71) vie for the puck after a faceoff during the first period of an NHL hockey game Friday, Feb. 18, 2022, in Las Vegas.

Associated Press

start analyzing."

Faceoff probability graphics are set to debut on Sportsnet in Canada this week and on ESPN and Turner later in March. Down the road, the stat could become a gambling opportunity for real-time, in-game betting.

"The technology will enable that," Lehanski said, deferring to league officials

about what might become betting options in the near future. "The technology is at a place and will soon get to a place where almost any in-game event could be processed to potentially be a bet type — something that someone could take a bet on."

Priya Ponnappalli, senior manager of Amazon Machine Learning Solutions

Lab, said the NHL and AWS built the model using data from thousands of faceoffs from the NHL's Hockey Information and Tracking System (HITS).

"This data source was significantly varied and complex, incorporating such information as a player's home and away faceoff statistics, head-to-head matchup history, player characteris-

tics such as height, weight, and handedness and game context such as the faceoff location, game score, and faceoff time," she said. "This combination of historical success rates, player matchup characteristics, and game context brings together HITS and puck and player tracking data to provide a complete perspective for a faceoff's dynamics."

Lehanski said ideas like this dates to Commissioner Gary Bettman and TV executive David Hill's Fox-Trax glowing puck from the mid-1990s. Technology has advanced so far that it has paved the way for more precise elements like the new faceoff predictor tool. "Really, this is just the beginning," Lehanski said. "Today we're just talking about face offs, but this could expand the way we look at goaltending, power plays and almost everything else. There's so much more."

It likely won't be as scientific as some of the data in other sports — mostly because of hockey's inherent randomness. That's why the NHL and AWS focused on faceoffs as a gateway into more advanced data. □

Bob Baffert sues Churchill Downs over 2-year suspension

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (AP) — Bob Baffert has sued Churchill Downs and track leadership in federal court, seeking to overturn the embattled Hall of Fame trainer's two-year suspension on grounds it violated his due process rights.

The suit filed Tuesday in U.S. District Court names Churchill Downs Inc., CEO William C. Carstanjen and board chair R. Alex Rankin. The historic track suspended Baffert last spring through 2023 and cited a recent spate of failed drug tests by his horses including now-deceased colt Medina Spirit after he won the Kentucky Derby. A post-race drug test revealed the corticosteroid betamethasone in his system, which is allowed in Kentucky but prohibited on race day.

Kentucky racing stewards last week disqualified Medina Spirit and handed Baffert a 90-day suspension and \$7,500 fine. Churchill Downs recognized runner-up Mandaloun as winner soon after. Kentucky Horse Racing Commission director Marc A. Guilfoil on Friday denied the trainer's request to stay the suspension that is scheduled to begin on March 8.

Baffert and his representatives have argued that the steroid in Medina Spirit came from the topical ointment Otomax, rather than an injection that is banned. Attorney Clark Brewster stated in a release Tuesday that Churchill Downs is not tasked with relegating horse racing in Kentucky but "could unilaterally ban" a trainer without having

facts or any semblance of due process.

"Churchill Downs and Mr. Carstanjen knew full well that imposing its suspension, based on zero factual or legal support, would give illegitimate credibility to a false narrative about Bob," Brewster added, "creating pressure on the Kentucky Race Horsing Commission stewards to take action against him, too."

Churchill Downs called Baffert's lawsuit disappointing but not surprising in a statement and said it would fight the suit and defend the company's rights.

"His claims are meritless and consistent with his pattern of failed drug tests, denials, excuses and attempts to blame others and identify loopholes in order to avoid taking responsibility for his



Jockey John Velazquez, front left, stands with Jill Baffert as they watch as Jill's husband, trainer Bob Baffert, holds up the winner's trophy after their victory with Medina Spirit in the 147th running of the Kentucky Derby at Churchill Downs in Louisville, Ky.

Associated Press

actions," it added.

Medina Spirit died on Dec. 6 from what Baffert said was a heart attack following a workout at Santa Anita race track in California. A

necropsy revealed no definitive cause for his death. The horse's ashes will be interred at a retirement farm for thoroughbred horses in Kentucky. □

Union rejects MLB's last offer at deadline to cancel games

By **RONALD BLUM**

JUPITER, Fla. (AP) — Players have rejected Major League Baseball's "best and final offer" to end the sport's lockout before the league's deadline to avoid canceled games.

MLB made its last offer about 90 minutes before a self-imposed 5 p.m. deadline Tuesday. The league has threatened to cancel opening day on March 31 without a deal by then.

Commissioner Rob Manfred was expected to speak around 5 p.m. about the situation.

The union convened a call of its player representatives after receiving MLB's offer. Players have repeatedly cautioned that significant differences remained in key economic areas, and MLB's proposal did not close that gap in their eyes.

Baseball is now on the precipice of losing regular season games to a work stoppage for the first time since 1995.

The sides made progress during 16 1/2 hours of bargaining Monday, then exchanged new offers Tuesday.

— MLB proposed raising the luxury tax threshold from \$210 million to \$220 million in each of the next three seasons, \$224 million in 2025 and \$230 in 2026 — unchanged from its prior offer. Players asked for \$238 million this year, \$244 million in 2023, \$250 million in 2024,



Baseball Commissioner Rob Manfred outside Roger Dean Stadium on Monday, Feb. 28, 2022, in Jupiter, Fla., after a labor negotiating session with baseball players.

Associated Press

\$256 million in 2025 and \$263 in 2026.

— MLB increased its offer for a new bonus pool for pre-arbitration players from \$25 million to \$30 million, and the union dropped from \$115 million to \$85 million for this year, with \$5 million yearly increases.

— MLB proposed raising the minimum salary from \$570,500 to \$700,000 this year, up from its previous offer of \$675,000, and included increases of \$10,000 annually. The union asked for \$725,000 this year, \$745,000 in 2023, \$765,000 in 2024 and increases for 2025 and 2026 based on the Con-

sumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners.

— MLB offered to have the five top picks in the amateur draft determined by a lottery.

— MLB would expand the postseason to 12 teams, the figure the union prefers to management's original request for 14.

"We thought there was a path to a deal last night and that both sides were closing in on the major issues," an MLB official said before the last offer was transmitted to the union, speaking on the condition he not be identified by name. "They couldn't

make us a CBT proposal (competitive balance tax) last night, so we agreed to extend the deadline to exhaust every option.

"The MLBPA had a decidedly different tone today and made proposals inconsistent with the prior discussions. We will be making our best offer before the 5 p.m. deadline."

Mets star pitcher Max Scherzer and free-agent reliever Andrew Miller were present for talks, the ninth straight day of bargaining and the 90th day of the lockout.

Manfred had said Monday was the last possible day to

reach an agreement that would allow the minimum time needed for spring training in order to play openers as scheduled on March 31.

The union said it didn't necessarily agree to the timeframe.

The sides agreed Monday, subject to an overall deal, to expand the postseason from 10 to 12 teams, rather than the 14 MLB had hoped for.

The union believed there was an understanding on luxury tax rates, which management had been proposing to substantially steepen while eliminating higher penalties for recidivist high spenders.

Players' latest proposals contemplated giving up on expanding salary arbitration from the top 22% to 35% by service time of the players with at least two seasons of service and less than three, but only if MLB agreed to other union proposals.

Players would lose \$20.5 million in salary for each day of the season that is canceled, according to a study by The Associated Press, and the 30 teams would lose large sums that are harder to pin down.

Spring training games were to have begun Saturday, but baseball's ninth work stoppage — and first since 1995 — already has led to exhibitions being canceled through March 7. □

Fury gets confidence by Whyte no-show ahead of title fight



Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Round one to Tyson Fury? The WBC heavyweight champion's all-British title defense against Dillian

Whyte at Wembley Stadium might not be until April 23 but Fury believes he has got the upper hand already.

Whyte didn't turn up to the first press conference to publicize the fight on Tuesday, with Fury's U.K. promoter, Frank Warren, claiming the challenger demanded and then turned down the offer of a private jet to fly him over from his Portugal base.

Fury said Whyte's no-show "has given me that much more confidence."

"He's definitely shown the fight flag in this fight, the way he's going on about not going face to face," Fury said at Wembley. "Of course he doesn't. Because he'll see the fire in my

eyes and think, 'I'm getting smashed to bits.'

"It's fear, it's terror, I don't blame him for not being here today ... The buildup to the fight will be fantastic because Tyson Fury versus his own shadow sells."

Warren said he expects just under 100,000 fans will be at one of the biggest heavyweight bouts to be held in Britain.

It marks Fury's return to Britain after five successive fights in the United States, including a trilogy against Deontay Wilder.

As for Whyte, it's his first world title fight. He's en-

titled to 20% of the \$41 million purse, making it his career-high payday.

Whyte only signed the contract for the fight at the last minute, with Warren saying Whyte had sought to renegotiate terms.

"Champions bank on themselves to win. That's what they do to become the king — you win the title, you get the money," Warren said.

"It's just not right. We are where we are but Dillian Whyte is in Portugal. He should be here. It's disgraceful that he's not here, it's not professional." □